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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 000802

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [SU](#) [JA](#)
SUBJECT: SUDANESE ADVISOR NAFIE VISITS TOKYO

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)
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11. (C) SUMMARY: Dr. Nafie Ali Nafie, the Assistant to the President of Sudan, made an official visit to Japan March 3-9 at the invitation of MOFA. MOFA officials report "frank and direct talks" took place, but said there is a wide variance between Japanese and Sudanese perceptions of the situation in Sudan. Subjects of discussion included Darfur, the North-South Peace Process, limited debt relief, and bilateral relations. The Japanese believed it appropriate to invite the Sudanese in the runup to TICAD IV in May and the G-8 Summit in July. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) During Nafie's visit he paid courtesy calls on Prime Minister Fukuda and Chief Cabinet Secretary Machimura, according to a briefing provided by MOFA First Africa Division Director Shigeru Ushio. In addition, Nafie met with Foreign Minister Koumura, who also hosted a dinner in his honor at Iikura Guest House, and had meetings with Minister of Finance Nukaga and Sadakazu Tanigagki, Chairman of the Liberal Democratic Party's Policy Research Council, as well as with representatives of JETRO, JBIC, JICA, and Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry officials. He was accompanied by Dr. Mustapha Osman Ismaeil, advisor to the president and former Foreign Minister, Dr. Awad Ahmed El-Jaz, Minister of Finance and National Economy, Dr. El-Fateh Ali Siddig, undersecretary of the Ministry of International Cooperation, Mr. Adil Ibrahim Mustafa, Deputy Director of the Sudan MOFA's Department of Asian Affairs, and several other staffers.

"THERE ARE NO PROBLEMS"

13. (C) According to Ushio, the discussions resulted in a "very frank exchange of views" that did not lead to the achievement of a common understanding. Nafie's replies to questions concerning Darfur, UNAMID, and the North-South Peace Process were all similar: "There is no problem." On Darfur, the Sudanese claimed that the facts of the situation are being distorted by the European and American mass media and that their government is fully committed to a dialogue. On UNAMID deployment, they claim to be cooperating with the deployment of forces and that the humanitarian situation is "not a big problem." On Chad, they asserted there is no problem with ameliorating relations and said they will make an effort to do so. With regard to the North South Peace Process, they said they are fully committed to a steady implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and that they will comply with the will of the people if a referendum supports independence for the south.

DEBT CANCELLATION

14. (C) The one "deliverable" of the visit was an illusory

debt cancellation deal. Of Sudan's total debt to Japan of approximately USD 400 million dating back to the 1970's, Tokyo agreed to cancel USD 28 million. But Ushio explained that this particular relief had already been agreed to at the 1978 UNCTAD conference. The debts just recently matured, and Japan had considered announcing their formal cancellation a bit earlier, but the situation in Darfur was very bad, so the timing for such an announcement was wrong. And in addition, the "cancellation" is only conditional at this time; the Japanese expect the Sudanese to spend the forgiven USD 28 million on projects of direct benefit to the people before agreeing that the deal is final.

BILATERAL RELATIONS

15. (C) Sudan and Japan agreed during the talks to resume a political dialogue first begun three years ago. This dialogue will consist of one or perhaps two meetings per year, and no new committee or formal infrastructure was established for such meetings. Ushio said the subject of Japan's deployment to Sudan of Self Defense Forces (SDF) was also briefly mentioned, and the Sudanese had been unaware the Japanese were considering the possibility of sending forces to participate in UNMIS or to help with humanitarian relief operations. When pressed for more details on what the Japanese are considering, Ushio demurred, noting only that the Ministry of Defense is opposed to sending the SDF and inter-agency discussions are still at a very preliminary stage. Ushio mentioned that although Japan has many problems with Sudanese behavior, it is hesitant to criticize them publicly, believing that to have influence it is necessary to maintain amicable relations.

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16. (C) Ushio described the Sudanese delegation as "very difficult to deal with" and described Nafie and his colleagues as "very tough guys," especially el-Jaz, who is a former oil minister who has long experience negotiating with the Chinese and others. The Japanese were left with the impression that the Sudanese are trying to establish a more active and outward looking foreign policy.
SCHIEFFER